

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 011455Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL MILAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5868
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS MILAN 0397

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: CGEN APER ABUD
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT OF CONSULAR STAFF

REF: STATE 036833

1. IN RESPONSE TO STATE REFTELS A-916 AND STATE 016438, WE REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE TWO (2) PIT EMPLOYEES CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO MEET THE MINIMUM OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THIS POST DURING THE PEAK SUMMER SEASON. THIS IS ONE IN ADDITION TO THE PIT POSITION AUTHORIZED BY AMEMBASSY ROME'S TELEGRAM 2931 OF 15 FEB, 1978.

2. THE NEED FOR THIS REINFORCEMENT OF OUR PERSONNEL FLOWS FROM THE HARD FACTS OF OUR GROWING WORKLOAD SHOWN BELOW:

A. NON-IMMIGRANT VISA STATISTICS:

1) NIV ACTIVITY:

- A) FIRST QUARTER FY 76-77 5211 (AVERAGE 62 PER DAY)
- B) FIRST QUARTER FY 77-78 6775 (AVERAGE 81 PER DAY)
- C) PERCENT INCREASE: 30PC OVER SAME QUARTER LAST FY.

2) PRESENT NIV STAFF:

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A) ONE US VICE CONSUL. (THIS POSITION HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE NOVEMBER 1977 AND IS NOT SCHEDULED TO BE FILLED UNTIL JUNE-JULY 1978).

B) TWO FOREIGN SERVICE LOCALS.

3. THE STATISTICS NOW SHOW AN INCREASE OF 30PERCENT OF NIV'S ISSUED

IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS FY OVER THE NIV'S ISSUED DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE LAST FY. MOREOVER OUR EXPERIENCE OF THIS QUARTER SHOWS THAT WITH THE AUTOMATED VISA LOOKLOT SYSTEM VISA PROCESSING TIME HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY INCREASED AND AT PRESENT PERSONNEL LEVELS PROBABLY CANNOT BE REDUCED BY MAKING OPTIMAL USE OF THE NEW EQUIPMENT.

4. A CLEAN CASE, WITHOUT PROBLEMS, IF PROCESSED BY ITSELF FROM RECEPTION TO DELIVERY, TAKES APPROXIMATELY EIGHT MINUTES.

DURING THIS "OFF SEASON" PERIOD, THE TWO VISA CLERKS PROCESS AN AVERAGE OF 81.6 VISAS PER DAY. TOGETHER THEY SPEND A MINIMUM OF 664 MINUTES (11 HOURS 6 MINUTES) ON THIS VISA ACTIVITY EVERY DAY. THIS LEAVES EACH CLERK APPROXIMATELY 1-1/2 HOURS A DAY PER ADMINISTRATIVE WORK, I.E. FILING, ANSWERING TELEPHONE CALLS, UPDATING RECORDS, AND CORRESPONDENCE. THE PRESENTATION OF A FEW PROBLEM APPLICANTS A DAY, SERIOUSLY REDUCES AND OFTENTIMES COMPLETELY CONSUMES THEIR TIME NEEDED TO PERFORM REQUIRED ADMINISTRATIVE WORK.

5. OUR EXPERIENCE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 75-80PC OF THE DAILY WALK-INS ARE FOR CONSULAR SERVICES, AND APPROXIMATELY 60-70PC OF THE 300 DAILY INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS ARE FOR THE CONSULAR SECTION - A MAJORITY OF THEM FOR VISA INFORMATION. (IN THE PAST 11 MONTHS DURING WHICH WE HAVE KEPT A DAILY COUNT, THE MAIN OFFICES OF THE CONSULATE ALONE HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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RECEIVED ALMOST 56,000 TELEPHONE CALLS AND OVER 48,000 VISITORS). MOREOVER, THE CONTINUING INCREASED DEMAND FOR ALL CONSULAR SERVICES CREATES PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH LEND THEMSELVES TO JUSTIFIABLE COMPLAINTS FROM VISITORS WHO MUST RETURN TO THE CONSULATE GENERAL A SECOND TIME FOR VISAS, AND ALSO FROM THE STRAINED LOCAL STAFF WHO MUST CONTINUE TO EXERT THEMSELVES TO THEIR UTMOST EVERY WORKING DAY. UNDER THESE WORKING CONDITIONS ONLY EMERGENCY CASES CAN RECEIVE PROMPT "ONE CALL SERVICE" AND ALL OTHERS MUST BE ASKED TO RETURN FOR THEIR VISAS. THIS DOES NOT MEET OUR AIMS OR THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPT WHICH ARE TO SATISFY ALL DEMANDS FOR CONSULAR SERVICES EFFECTIVELY, EFFICIENTLY AND PROMPTLY, AS WE ARE AGAIN REMINDED IN STATES 189686.

6. AS THIS DATA DEMONSTRATES, OUR PRESENT STAFF IS NOW, DURING THE "OFF SEASON", OVERWORKED AND PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO PROVIDE AS EXPEDITIOUS AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC AS THE POST WOULD LIKE. IT IS APPARENT THAT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL HELP WE WILL BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE FORTHCOMING INCREASED DEMANDS FOR VISA SERVICES DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE HARD PRESSED TO SATISFACTORILY MEET THE DEMANDS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE YEAR.

7. IN ORDER TO MEET MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS, THE NIV SECTION NEEDS A FULL TIME STAFF COMPOSED OF ONE VISA OFFICER AND THREE FOREIGN SERVICE LOCAL CLERKS PLUS ON PIT FOR HIGH SEASON WORK. THIS STAFF WOULD BE ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING VISA ACTIVITIES:

A) ONE FSL'S TO RECEIVE THE PUBLIC, EXAMINE PASSPORTS AND VISA APPLICATIONS, AND PROVIDE GENERAL INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE VISITORS.

B) ONE LOCAL TO TYPETAPES FOR COMPUTER PROCESSING, RECORD COMPUTER RESPONSE ON APPLICATION, AND SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION AND PASSPORT TO THE VISA OFFICER
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FOR HIS EXAMINATION AND INTERVIEW WHEN NECESSARY.

C) THE VISA OFFICER, AFTER MAKING HIS DECISION, PASSES THE APPROVED APPLICATION AND PASSPORT TO THE REMAINING FSL FOR APPROPRIATE INSERTION INTO PASSPORT AND TO RETURN COMPLETED PASSPORT TO THE APPLICANT. THE VISA OFFICER, IMMEDIATELY AFTER INTERVIEW, PERSONALLY RETURNS PASSPORTS TO THOSE REFUSED WITH APPROPRIATE EXPLANATION.

8. WE WISH TO RECALL THAT MILAN LOST ITS SENIOR VISA SECTION FLS POSITION
IN JAN 1975 NOT BECAUSE WE COULD GET ALONG WITHOUT THE POSITION BUT BECAUSE WE COULD NOT GET ALONG WITH ITS THEN INCUMBENT. HOWEVER, WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE EMBASSY AT THE TIME THAT IT WOULD TRY TO ACCOMMODATE OUR NEED IF OUR WORK LOAD BECAME SUCH AS TO WARRANT RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SLOT.

9. THAT TIME HAS COME AND PASSED WITHOUT MY HAVING FULLY REALIZED HOW THE GAP BETWEEN OUR VISA WORK LOAD AND RESOURCES HAD GROWN. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE SECOND CONSULAR OFFICER, WHO CONSTITUTES ALMOST 30PC OF OUR TOTAL VISAS WORK FORCE, OUR STAFF HAS REACHED THE BREAKING POINT BEFORE THE HIGH SEASON HAS EVEN BEGUN.

10. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE NEED TWO PIT POSITIONS, ONE TO BEGIN AT ONCE AND THE SECOND AS THE HIGH WORK LOAD PERIOD RESUMES. FINA

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